

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BLOGGERS ROUNDTABLE SUBJECT: THE ROLE OF THE CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL, RADIOLOGICAL, NUCLEAR AND HIGH-YIELD EXPLOSIVE CONSEQUENCE MANAGEMENT RESPONSE FORCE IN THE EVENT OF A CATASTROPHIC INCIDENT IN THE UNITED STATES BRIEFERS: COLONEL ROBERT CUNNIFF, U.S. NORTHERN COMMAND'S FUTURE OPERATIONS DIVISION, DIRECTORATE OF OPERATIONS, PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE COLONEL LOU VOGLER, U.S. ARMY NORTH'S FUTURE OPERATIONS DIVISION, DIRECTORATE OF OPERATIONS, FORT SAM HOUSTON TIME: 10:05 A.M. EDT DATE: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2008

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CHARLES "JACK" HOLT (chief, New Media Operations, Office of the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs): I'd like to welcome Lieutenant Colonel Robert Cunniff of the U.S. Northern Command's Future Operations Division and Army Colonel Lou Vogler from U.S. Army North, who was with us a few weeks ago.

And so, gentlemen, welcome to the Bloggers' Roundtable and appreciate you all being with us this morning. And so, Colonel Cunniff, I'll -- the floor is yours.

COL. CUNNIFF: Okay, sir. Well, thank you.

The correct pronunciation of the last name is actually Cunniff, and I am the future operations planner here at U.S. NORTHCOM. And I've worked the last two-plus years on the CCMRF concept of operations and with CCMRF sourcing.

But on behalf of the men and women of NORAD and U.S. NORTHCOM and General Gene Renuart, thanks for allowing myself and Colonel Vogler down there at Fort Sam Houston to participate in this morning's roundtable.

As many of you know, today's a historic day for NORTHCOM, and it's fitting that we conduct this roundtable on the day that forces are assigned to this headquarters. As you're all well aware, NORTHCOM has very few assigned forces, and in the past we've had to coordinate very closely with the joint force provider, specifically United States Joint Forces Command, and the individual services to have access to forces to execute our missions of homeland defense and, more importantly, for this CBRNE mission, defense support of civil authorities.

Our mission with regard to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and high-yield explosives, or CBRNE, is very clear. When directed by the secretary of Defense, our commander has the responsibility to conduct consequence management within the 48 contiguous states, District of Columbia, Alaska, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. And it's all in support of civil

authorities in response to a CBRNE event or incident. Our essential tasks are to save lives, mitigate human suffering and facilitate recovery operations for the state and local -- our state and local partners.

I think, first, it's important to understand that the Department of Defense, and more specifically USNORTHCOM, operates in support of a primary agency. And success in our commanders' eyes is measured at the state and local level. We feel if the governor and the state tag of the affected state is successful in returning to normalcy, then that's success in DOD and USNORTHCOM's eyes.

I just want to take a few minutes to discuss in a little more detail this thing called CCMRF or CBRNE Consequence Management Response Force. And it's an acronym within an acronym.

CCMRF consists of a wide range of capabilities from across a joint spectrum. And there's no one service that can source or provide all the capabilities that you would find in the CCMRF. So it truly is joint.

The CCMRF team consists of about 4,700 personnel, but that number would fluctuate based on the type of unit that the services and/or USJFCOM would source against General Renuart's requirement. And they would deploy as part of the Department of Defense Initial Response Force for a CBRNE incident.

It would not be, you know, in the worst-case scenario of a 10- kiloton NUDET in any city in our great nation. The CCMRF is not going to be the only thing that we deploy as Department of Defense. So don't think, you know, once we deploy one CCMRF, our job is done. That is clearly not the case.

But CCMRF capabilities include search and rescue, decontamination, medical aviation, communications, additional command and control, and logistic support. And again, that's the initial response. When the Joint Task Force commander gets on the ground, conducts an assessment and works -- liaises with the state and local leadership and the incident commander, he may dial back to NORTHCOM and request additional capability. And we have a means in which to do that as well.

Across DOD, there's numerous military domestic CBRNE consequence management capability. And I think that you guys are all familiar with a lot of them, but I'll just go over them. Clearly we have the CCMRF. But each state has what's called a Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team, or WMDCST. It consists of 22 Title 32 personnel that are trained to detect, identify, assess potential CBRNE agents and advise the local leadership.

That capability is trained by U.S. Army North down there at San Antonio, Texas. General Turner and his folks have a special team that conduct the training and certification of those capabilities. But there's 55 WMDCSTs. Every state has one. Some states have multiple CSTs.

A few years ago -- I don't know the exact year -- but as a bridging strategy, the National Guard Bureau established what's called CBRNE Response Force or CRF. It was formerly known as CRFP, and there was a CBRNE Emergency Response Force Package, but recently the National Guard has dropped the "P" from that acronym.

The CRFs -- there's currently 17 CRFs, and this element consists of anywhere from 90 to 180 Army and Air Force National Guard personnel, and they're

trained to triage, conduct mass-casualty evacuation, patient decon, patient stabilization. And CRFs are regionally dispersed throughout our nation, and there's at least one in each of the 10 FEMA regions.

Finally, there's the Title 10 response. The CCMRF is that initial federal response that deploys in the immediate aftermath of and in the immediate proximity to a CBRNE incident. And again, I mentioned the CCMRF provides that leading-edge response for the Department of Defense. The CCMRF is a Title 10 capability. It has, in -- the CCMRF that we assumed operational control of today has very few Reserve component capability. In fact, there's only one in CCMRF. We call it CCMRF I. It's a Reserve decontamination company from Washington State.

The CCMRF is command and controlled by a joint task force. We at NORTHCOM have a specialized joint task force called Joint Task Force Civil Support. They're headquartered at Fort Monroe, Virginia under the command of Major General Daniel -- he goes by "Chip" -- Long. And he would be the commander of the joint task force which the CCMRF would be part of.

Once deployed, the CCMRF configures into what's called task forces, and those task forces are Task Force Response, Task Force Aviation, which obviously has rotary-wing helicopter support, and Task Force Medical. Under this configuration, General Long, the joint task force commander, can support the local incident command either geographically or by task and function.

And again, I mentioned at the beginning that today is historic. In April of this year, the secretary of Defense made a historic decision to assign forces to Commander USNORTHCOM for his missions. This force is single-mission-focused. It's available today to General Renuart. It's been notified of the mission.

It was recently trained and validated by our Joint Force Land Component commander, General Turner, with an exercise -- a mission rehearsal exercise done at Fort Stewart, Georgia from the 9th to the 19th of this month. And it is ready.

And as a result of this assignment, our area of responsibility is better prepared to respond to a CBRNE incident.

That's sort of my opening comment, if you will. And I'd be happy and I think Colonel Vogler would be happy to answer any of your questions.

MR. HOLT: All right, sir, thank you very much.

Colonel Vogler, do you have something you want to start us out with? Colonel Vogler, are you still there?

COL. VOGLER: Yeah, I'm back with you. I had a few technical difficulties, but we came back up about halfway through Colonel Cunniff's speech. Are you with me now?

MR. HOLT: Okay. Yes, sir, we've got you loud and clear now.

COL. VOGLER: Okay. (Laughs.) Yeah, just, again, I'm Colonel Vogler, chief future operations, U.S. Army North. And as Colonel Cunniff discussed -- he kind of ran through the response concept there; a great briefing from the portions that I heard.

It's unfortunate that there seems to be some confusion out there about the mission of this force. Again, Colonel Cunniff covered it very clearly. But the purpose of the CCMRF -- I say CCMRF -- (pronounces term "Sic-Murf") -- but it's the CCMRF -- (pronounces term "See-Smurf") -- but same acronym. The purpose of this force is to provide a rapid, robust initial response capability to support civil authorities during a catastrophic CBRNE incident; and, of course, CBRNE being chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or high-yield explosives.

All right, the soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines in this force are in a federal status. They operate as any other federal force would in the homeland, in strict compliance with all our laws and authorities that dictate our role in domestic operations.

Again, the force responds in an additive measure to those local, state and federal response capabilities with the purpose of saving lives and alleviating human suffering and mitigating great property damage. It brings the capabilities that Colonel Cunniff talked about -- initial force, with additional forces being brought in as needed based on the capability of requirements for a given situation.

Again, DOD has previously identified forces for CBRNE response, but assigning them now to USNORTHCOM makes those units directly available to this headquarters to coordinate, plan, train, and be better ready to respond, should an incident occur. It gives them an opportunity to train with some of the civilian consequence management managers. We had interagency role players and representatives at the training exercise in September to help train this force to operate in this unique domestic environment, as well as the CBRNE environment that they may have to operate in.

Just to reiterate, again, it's a federal force operating inside the standing authorities. They provide additional critical capabilities to help save lives and alleviate suffering, and that, as part of U.S. Northern Command, this force will be better able to respond and train and be better integrated to protect our homeland.

Thank you.

MR. HOLT: All right, sir, thank you very much.

Jason, you were first on line. Why don't you get us started?

Q This is Jason Sigger with the Armchair Journalist.

I have no questions as to the controversy over the non-lethal weapons comment that was in the Army Times. I'll let somebody else cover that.

I was interested in the CCMRFs. Myself, I understand there's supposed to be two other ones that will not be active duty-based, that that will mostly be Reserve and Guard, with later activation dates. And my question is, given the current strains overseas on the long war and such, is it still on track to develop these units? And will they still be as effective in first-response kind of a fashion if they do have to be called up from a reserve status?

COL. VOGLER: Rob, are you going first, or -- let me give it a shot and then you can answer if you want.

MR. HOLT: All right, Colonel, why don't you go ahead?

COL. CUNNIFF: He might have fallen off. Colonel Vogler, you still on, sir?

COL. VOGLER: (Laughs.) Yeah, I'm having finger problems now. I can't blame the phone.

Yeah, I was just going to say that, you know, NORTHCOM's really leading the coordination with DOD and the joint staff. But there is a plan out there to incrementally build the CCMRF forces. The other two, as you mentioned, are going to be Reserve component-based. The coordination has already begun to assemble those forces and look at their training and access and readiness postures.

But the second and third CCMRFs are there for the potential of multiple events. And so in terms of their ability to respond, that is a factor. But they plan to be the follow-up forces, and that's why they've got a slightly different readiness posture than the initial CCMRF element.

Rob.

COL. CUNNIFF: Thanks, sir.

Yeah, I would just, you know, echo what Colonel Vogler said. We are in close coordination with the Joint Staff; reference again -- I would call CCMRFs II and III. CCMRF I will always be an active- component CCMRF. And again, the one small capability that is Reserve component is a U.S. Army Reserve, so it's a Title 10 status.

In accordance with the Joint Staff, CBRNE Consequence Management Execute Order, which was published on 27 June, commander, USNORTHCOM, has CCMRFs II and III incrementally sourced -- CCMRF II in FY '10, and then CCMRF III in FY '11. They are, as Colonel Vogler said, predominantly Reserve component-sourced.

When General Renuart makes a decision or a recommendation to the SECDEF to bring on CCMRFs II and III, with that comes a mobilization recommendation. So we would obviously have to provide that to the SECDEF and a decision would have to be made for mobilization of that force.

That force will train day to day in a Title 32 status. But if we have to commit it to an incident, either a separate incident from what CCMRF I would be executing or additive to CCMRF I, then a mobilization recommendation is required by General Renuart to the SECDEF.

You know, National Guard -- there's -- we've established a precedence for National Guard to move in and out of different titles every day here at USNORTHCOM. We have fighters that are part of Operation Noble Eagle on the NORAD side that are in a Title 32 status. And then, if we have to scramble them, they're in a Title 10 status. So the precedent is there for that force. It's just a larger scale. It's not, you know, one or two aircraft. It's potentially a brigade combat team from the state of Indiana, if you will, that we're looking to exercise.

General Renuart has said that, you know, he will always advocate for the National Guard. And he's worked very closely with the National Guard Bureau

and the Joint Staff to find ways in which to utilize this capability. And, you know, he's on the record as saying he doesn't care what status the force is in, whether it's active component or Reserve component. He desires forces that are manned, trained, equipped, notified of the mission, and can execute in accordance with the response posture levels that he dictates in his orders.

Q Thanks very much.

MR. HOLT: All right. John.

Q Good morning, gentlemen.

I just -- first off, to give you great pats on the back for having the courage to have an acronym called "Smurf." (Laughter.)

COL. CUNNIFF: We are looking for a new name as well.

Q (Laughs.) Just for some perspective on my question, I was -- in '98 and '99, I was the plans training and operations officer for the WMD Response Task Force West at 5th Army.

Colonel Vogler, your staff duty -- still got to feed the critters on weekends?

COL. VOGLER: Roger.

Q At least you have indoor plumbing now. I used to tell people I worked in a tourist trap with outdoor plumbing.

As I understand all this, and as somebody who was one of you guys, literally, back when there were two RTFs in 1st and 5th Army, all that's changed is instead of having to go through DOMs to get to JFCOM to ask for someone to come, all of it in response to a request from FEMA or a state agency, is NORTHCOM has an assigned force capable of doing that, cutting out several layers of the bureaucracy. Is that pretty much it?

COL. VOGLER: Yeah, Colonel Vogler, just as we play with who's answering.

But, yeah, Roger, exactly. They're assigned to NORTHCOM. It changes the day-to-day relationship and the specific authorities with regard to the force and the ability to respond. However, it's still in response to that request from authorities for support over.

Q Check. So essentially nothing's really changed other than we've gotten more efficient. The reason I ask is that's pretty much the story I've been putting out as I fight this issue on the lefty blogs, because writing it on our own blogs doesn't necessarily get read by the people who are most exercised about it. And wherever that stuff came from from the Army Times is probably really the thing that's causing this.

That's all I've got, Jack. I just wanted to make sure that I understood what I understood.

COL. CUNNIFF: Hey, John, Lieutenant Colonel Cuniff here at NORTHCOM. I would totally agree with Colonel Vogler in that, you know, the response chain really has not changed. And now that Commander USNORTHCOM has that capability,

he has the ability, because it's an assigned force, to deploy the CCMRF in anticipation if he's got actionable intelligence that says something's going to happen in Boston, Massachusetts. He could pre-position the capability because he owns it and because of the authorities given under him in the -- (inaudible).

But the one thing that I would like to also add to Colonel Vogler's response is that this force, the CCMRF, Colonel Cloutier's force down at Fort Stewart, Georgia, which is a good portion of the 4,700, it's focused. I mean, if you've talked to Colonel Cloutier or any of his soldiers, it's focused towards this CCMRF mission.

And I think in the past, you know, as you know, we've had multiple response forces responsible to do multiple things. And I think for this force, like I mentioned, it is single-mission-focused. And, you know, some of the CBRNE training that units might have done last -- you might ask Colonel Cloutier, and he's probably doing some of those first.

MR. HOLT: All right, sir.

And Toby.

Q Good morning, gentlemen. Toby Nunn from the Briefing Room.

I've got actually two questions. First of all, I'm very impressed by the robust size of this force and 4,700 personnel. I mean, that's a brigade-sized element. And I'm even more impressed that the dog-faced soldiers are heading this up.

Did you say it's Colonel Cloutier? Because in the little write-up I have, it says Major. I just want to make sure I get that accurate.

COL. VOGLER: Yeah, Colonel Cloutier is the brigade commander. There is also a Major Cloutier that's a plans officer there; no relation, to my knowledge.

Q Oh, okay. Sorry. My mistake there, gentlemen.

The question I have comes from, you know, the opposite side of the spectrum, you know, being an infantry platoon sergeant, looking at an infantry force. This reminds me of the old DRF days and having someone sitting by the airfield ready to go. Is that kind of the feel that we're getting here? And obviously with the WMD CRFs teams from the local, state, you know, bear the initial response, but this force is, you know, obviously going to rapidly deploy to wherever. What is the battle handoff between the local authorities and them?

COL. VOGLER: Yeah, Colonel Vogler again. Do you have me?

MR. HOLT: Yes, sir.

COL. VOGLER: My mute button doesn't show whether it's on or off. That helps explain some of that.

Okay, a couple of things. The field we're going towards, in a sense, they won't be sitting on (green ramp ?), but they are ready, postured, with all their deployment preparations in place, with the force knowing that they have the responsibility. As Lieutenant Colonel Cunniff mentioned, the mission focus for the CBRNE response, yes. We have a designated assigned force who knows

their role and mission, has established response times and posture levels which can be changed based on threat, as we discussed. So that kind of is the feel we're going for. You know, and as they're training and maintaining their readiness for CCMRF, of course, they've got the opportunity to continue other training.

With regard to the integration, that's what -- JTFCS is a standing two-star joint headquarters that's the lead for CBRNE response operations. And their role at JTF is to bring the DOD force in and build that unity of effort so that the DOD support is additive to that incident commander on the ground.

You know, every incident is local. That incident commander on the ground runs it. The support request flows from the incident commander to the state to the federal, over to DOD for a portion of that response. And then the command -- it's JTFCS, Colonel Cloutier, for Task Force Operations, or Colonel Bricker for Task Force Aviation, et cetera, integrate their operation into that local response. And, of course, that being part of the challenge of operation in our domestic response is that we're not in charge. We're supporting that local, state or other federal official to execute that mission.

Does that kind of cover it?

Q Absolutely, sir. If I might trouble you for one more question, you know, last year out in Arizona they did a minor exercise. I've seen, you know, mass casualty exercise done at Hattiesburg, Mississippi. I'm a train-as-you-fight kind of guy, and a lot of people are. How are you going to, you know, conduct drills outside of the one that was just conducted, the MRE down at Fort Stewart, that kind of bring the general public's knowledge base up so that, you know, when guys are walking around in (ACUs ?), they don't hit the panic button?

COL. VOGLER: Yeah, that's a great point on how we get the word out to the public. We've got an incremental buildup of training to get the force ready. Then we've got some sustainment training. You know, about 85 percent of what the force will do is just common to their military tasks, just in the unique environment. So a lot of the training is focused on the leadership level and that integration that we just talked about.

We do have a communications program to make sure we get the word out to reinforce the public. Every chance we get, we try to involve, you know, state, local and federal officials in the training. We do this for all our range of options, not just on the CBRNE side but also on our course of our hurricane response.

But, for instance, last February JTFCS held a rehearsal-of- concept drill with the force, the CCMRF force from last year that was not yet assigned. And at that, they brought in officials out of New Jersey who were interested in that sort of response and used the scenario in their area to, one, train the CCMRF folks, and two, orient the local officials with how that response would go and flow. But we are integrating with FEMA and other officials.

Our national-level exercise program, Ardent Sentry '07 -- and Rob can back me up on this -- but Ardent Sentry '07 involved a 10-KT NUDET in Indianapolis, and that was widely covered and integrated. We had -- similarly, in '08, we had a chemical type response incident in the Seattle area that, again, integrated us with the state and federal responses as part of the exercise program.



But that is one of our objectives is to get the word out, is to make sure there's clear understanding, as opposed to this non-lethal confusion, if you will, misinterpretation that it was out there, that DOD would be in a supporting role out there to assist as required by the other officials.

Rob, do you want to follow up?

COL. CUNNIFF: Sir, I'll just pile on that, you know, Colonel Vogler said all of our exercises always include the interagency. And, you know, whether it's the local fire department, emergency managers or the National Guard, I mean, I think that, you know, when they're in the local diners and out and about in town, they're saying, "Hey, this weekend's drill is a major exercise that United States NORTHCOM and Army North and Joint Task Force Civil Support are participating in, I think that's part of our message is always including that interagency in the local and state responders so that, when we are out there, they know that it's a DOD presence.

MR. HOLT: And C.J.

Q Yes, sir.

Gentlemen, thank you again for holding another one of these. I missed the first one with Colonel Vogler. My name is C.J. Grisham with A Soldier's Perspective.

I have a -- I guess my main question is -- and it sounds like perhaps this Army Times article just got it wrong -- I have the dubious pleasure of attracting a wide group of crazy psycho people to my blog who have weird ideas about what the military really does, both deployed and here. But the Army Times article -- and Colonel Cloutier in particular talks a lot about the response as far as non-lethal and being trained in batons, tasers, et cetera.

So my concern is especially that we're using an active-duty unit recently returned from combat. How does this jibe with the Posse Comitatus Act? And how are we going to -- because Colonel Cloutier talks about suppressing dangerous and violent individuals. But that's not really our job as an active-duty force. So how are we working this with Posse Comitatus?

COL. VOGLER: This is Colonel Vogler. I'll take that one and then Rob can follow up.

First of all, I have not read the article by Colonel Cloutier. But I would like to paint it in a little bit of a perspective. We really, for their training, gave them a very challenging worst-case scenario. And I think, in the context of that, where we put the scenario kind of beyond those forces that they would need, with the requirement to bring in additional forces, and we put some of those tough questions of risk to the public and risk to the soldier in there, so it's kind of the context of a lot of the planning, thinking and second-order effects that perhaps he was looking at as he went into that interview.

Okay, the non-lethal weapons -- you know, the Army is fielding these brigade non-lethal capability sets across the Army. And Colonel Cloutier's unit was fielded with that. It loosely coincides with his assignment of this mission. But the assignment of this mission did not drive the distribution of that equipment set, to my knowledge. I think it was more happenstance than anything else. Four brigades have received a set, and more to follow.

You know, the mission of CCMRF in total is as we've discussed. It's in response to that catastrophic incident, in support of a civil agency. You know, a component of that CCMRF is to secure our responding forces and to make sure that we're protected and that we protect those operations that we're conducting.

But that is not the purpose or the mission of that unit. Overall we're there to support those civil agencies. And again, everything we do in the United States is within the constraints of Posse Comitatus and all of those other legal limitations on domestic operations. And that's our planning, that's our execution assumptions, and that's the guidelines we have going in.

So, you know, we've got people thinking about worst case. We've got him, you know, running the range of possibilities. And that's probably good that a commander's thinking, you know, in the extreme to make sure he's prepared for everything.

But the main role of our force is to go in in support of civil authorities, to provide those specific capabilities, to relieve the American -- to help the American people alleviate suffering and take care of those missions. And the non-lethal capability is just an Army fielding, which coincided with this. And it provides -- that Army fielding is providing that capability throughout the Army. Hopefully I answered your question.

Rob.

Q Actually, sir, if I could follow up really quick, I completely agree with you. And I understand that. I just wanted to kind of hear it from an official standpoint. So just to kind of clarify what you said, the way I'm hearing it, to make sure that I write this correctly, the reason that we have these tasers and batons is to protect our guys who aren't doing those active police roles but to keep our own soldiers safe as we help civil authorities.

COL. CUNNIFF: Hey, C.J., this is Lieutenant Colonel Cunniff at NORTHCOM.

Q Yes, sir.

COL. CUNNIFF: Two separate and distinct missions. The non-lethal set is an Army fielding, like Colonel Vogler said, that'll be in support of a named follow-on mission that Colonel Cloutier will execute. And that's in support of OIF or OEF. The non-lethal set of capability will not be utilized in the CBRNE consequence management realm in the homeland -- period, end of sentence. You know, the Posse Comitatus -- we understand the authorities and restrictions of that, but that's why we work closely, day in and day out, with National Guard capability that doesn't have that restriction. So -- and that's the beauty of capabilities like WMD CSTs and CRFs that are in a Title 32 status that can do different things that Title 10 forces cannot.

So, you know, Colonel Cloutier does have non-lethal capability, but he will not be utilizing that capability in a domestic mission.

Q Thank you, sir.

MR. HOLT: Okay. All right. We've got -- actually we're running a little over time, but just one quick round and any follow-up questions.

Q If I could follow up, this is Jason. I think there's a very important point that I'm glad was brought up that, just to be very, very clear, the non-lethal weapons packages are for force protection missions in overseas. And that's what I believe you said. And secondly --

COL. VOGLER: Yes, sir, it is.

Q Great. Great. I think that is one major overreaction that we've seen, that that was not a clear purpose. And just a very minor thing: Is the active denial system going to be any part of this fielding plan, the so-called microwave zapper, if you will?

COL. VOGLER: This is Colonel Vogler. I am not tracking that capability at all. I'm not tracking that as part of the fielding of the non-lethal capability sets. Not to my knowledge, it's not part of anything we have to do with CCMRF. But I can't speak to the Army's fielding plan.

COL. CUNNIFF: Yeah, it clearly has nothing to do with CCMRF. And I'm not all that well-versed on the ADS. But if a capability had that and desired to use it, that would be a decision that would have to be elevated to the secretary of Defense.

Q Thanks.

Q I do have one quick follow-up question. Again, I know we're over time. Is the role of this unit, the 3rd ID unit, is that an automated response, or is that one that's going to have to specifically be requested by the state or local governments?

COL. CUNNIFF: In accordance with the Joint Staff Execute Order, there has to be a request for assistance or an order from the president or the secretary of Defense for employment. So a request for assistance from a primary agency, FEMA or Department of Homeland Security, and/or an order from the secretary of Defense or the president of the United States. Q Thank you, sir.

MR. HOLT: Okay. All right. Well, gentlemen, have you got any closing thoughts for us? Colonel Cuniff?

COL. CUNNIFF: Yeah, again, you know, an historic day for USNORTHCOM. We appreciate getting the -- you know, having the ability to set the record straight and to tell our story.

One thing that I did want to correct; in my opening remarks, I said that there were three task forces -- Task Force Aviation, Medical, and I said Response, but the correct terminology is Operations. So it's Task Force Operations, Task Force Aviation and Task Force Medical.

But again, we appreciate what you all do. We appreciate your service, for those of you that wore a uniform. And again, we thank you for the opportunity to communicate to you the importance of this mission. Thank you.

MR. HOLT: All right. Colonel Vogler.

COL. VOGLER: Roger. Again, thank you for the opportunity again to talk about this, to make sure we're all on the same sheet of music; appreciate your interest and your support. Again, you know, we have the three bottom

lines. You know, this force will operate within the authorities as specified that all the federal forces already comply with, Posse Comitatus. We're here to bring those additional critical capabilities to save lives and eliminate -- alleviate human suffering; and as part of that federal response that builds on the state and local. At Northern Command, we appreciate the opportunity to have this assigned force, to better integrate it and make it better- prepared, God forbid should we ever need it.

Thank you.

MR. HOLT: All right, excellent. Thank you, gentlemen, very much for joining us here for the Bloggers Roundtable today. Thank you all.

COL. VOGLER: Thank you.

END.